

Baptiste Lake Plan

Blueprint for Moving Forward

Prepared by the Baptiste Lake Planning Committee, July 2009

About this 'Blueprint' document

This 'blueprint' document provides a brief recap of the four-year process through which the Baptiste Lake Plan was developed, a vision for the lake, and a list of all the Lake Plan recommendations, as well as who would be responsible for implementing these actions.

The complete Lake Plan document describes why a lake plan is necessary, what it is, and how it was developed. It also provides a vision for the lake, the historical context for the plan, the scientific basis for the recommendations, and the results of the survey of lake residents that was commissioned. Supporting maps, charts, and photographs are provided as well. Finally, the full plan provides some thoughts about implementing the Lake Plan, a list of the Lake Plan Committee members, and a list of financial contributors to the lake planning process. The full plan is some 70 pages in draft form, and it will be printed when it is revised and approved at the Stakeholder Meeting to be held on August 15, 2009 at Birch Cliff Lodge. A few reference copies of the full draft Lake Plan will be available at the Stakeholder Meeting. The full draft Lake Plan along with the surveys and studies are posted on the BLA website www.baptistelake.org.

To purchase a published copy of the final Baptiste Lake Plan when it is printed this fall (expected to sell for about \$20.00), please complete the order form at the back of this 'blueprint' summary.

The Lake Plan process

With Baptiste Lake continuing to experience such changes as easier highway access, greater property development, and increasing demands for recreational opportunities, many lake residents have become increasingly concerned about the future of the lake.

In 2005, the Baptiste Lake Association (BLA) – with the unanimous support of the Municipality of Hastings Highlands – began the process of developing a 'lake plan' for Baptiste Lake. A lake plan is intended to be a 'living document', an action plan for conserving, protecting and enhancing the special features of the lake. It enables everyone around the lake to personally contribute to its well-being and preservation, and to become stewards of the lake.

The Baptiste Lake Plan Committee, formed in 2005 and composed of lake residents, business owners and a municipal council member, has guided the development of the Baptiste Lake Plan through the following activities:

- 2005 – a series of scientific studies – Natural Heritage Study, Physical Elements Study, Land Use Study, Architectural Survey (available on the BLA website)
- May 2006 – a survey of shoreline, village and rural residents; posted results on the BLA website
- August 2006 – stakeholder workshop on survey results (available on the BLA website)
- August 2006 – Gala fundraising dinner and auction at Birch Cliff Lodge
- September 2006 – workshop for businesses and governments (available on the BLA website)
- Summer 2007 – second stakeholder workshop to review draft reports
- Summer 2008 – third stakeholder workshop to review draft recommendations

- Spring 2009 – draft of historical context (available on the BLA website) and Baptiste Lake community chapters
- June 2009 – draft of additional recommendations, lake plan report, and ‘blueprint’ document
- August 2009 – final stakeholder workshop prior to revisions and publication.

RECOMMENDED ACTION	Lake Residents/Local Businesses
	BLA
	Municipality
	County
	Provincial/Federal Government
	Government

The collective vision for Baptiste Lake, based on the survey of lake residents, is to protect, preserve and enhance – for future generations – the qualities that make the lake special to us – the natural beauty, the tranquility, the pristine waters, the natural ecosystems, the recreational opportunities, and the vibrant community that surrounds it. The vision can take many forms:

- watching a loon hunting for fish in the early morning mist
- sailing the main channel during a strong west wind
- lying on the dock in the still of the night watching the Milky Way swim through the night sky
- reading a good book during a rainy day in a warm cabin or sunroom
- teaching your children or grandchildren how to swim, paddle a canoe, or identify animals and plants
- catching a 40 inch muskie where a shelf drops into the main basin
- cross-country skiing on the forest access roads or across the lake during sunny winter days

Lake residents in the survey also identified threats to this vision. Some of these threats include:

- water pollution from septic systems, garbage, and boats, and degradation of the lake water quality by removal of the vegetative shoreline buffer
- fluctuating water levels and the potential for hydroelectric development, which may increase shoreline erosion and ice damage, as well as damage the scenic beauty and fish habitat
- night time noise and light pollution, which affect the peace and tranquility of the lake and the beauty of the night sky
- high speed personal watercraft and increased boat traffic, which endanger safe swimming and boating, as well as increase daytime noise, water pollution and shoreline erosion
- large-scale development, lot severances and back lot development, which diminish the natural beauty of the lake and further stress the carrying capacity of the lake.

This is the collective vision for Baptiste Lake.

Recommended Action Plan

Below are the recommended actions in the draft Lake Plan, and the designation of responsibility for implementing these actions. In some cases, it will be lake residents and businesses that are responsible for implementing changes, in other cases it will be the BLA, the municipality, the county, or the provincial or federal governments.

Recommended actions are organized in the following manner: recommendations pertaining to Baptiste Lake; recommendations relating to the land around the lake (further subdivided into shoreline and viewscape/watershed); the built environment; and the Baptiste Lake community.

ACTIONS ON BAPTISTE LAKE

<p>Water Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourage more volunteers to continue to collect water quality information through annual or more frequent spot-checking, as well as initiate, with Ministry of Natural Resources staff, the monitoring of tributary streams, and continue to inform residents of the results of this research (including trends over time) in a timely fashion. (Natural Heritage Inventory) 		X			
<p>Water Levels and Regulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> get involved in any proposal for a hydroelectric generating facility affecting Baptiste Lake, and ensure that the proponent conducts an assessment to demonstrate that there will be no negative impact on lake levels and surrounding environments, including lake trout and their spawning activity. (Physical Elements Report) 	X	X			
<p>Fish and Fish Habitat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> not oppose a maximum of two fishing derbies per year, one in July and one in August, outside of fish spawning seasons, until an analysis is completed on the impacts of fish derbies on tourism, ecology and the local economy. (Natural Heritage Inventory) work with the Ministry of Natural Resources on rehabilitation of the fishery. (Natural Heritage Inventory) encourage the provincial government to take measures to sustain and enhance the Baptiste Lake trout fishery, since the presence of lake trout is the sign of a healthy deep water lake. (Stakeholder Meeting) 	X				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work with the Ministry of Natural Resources on rehabilitation of the fishery. (Natural Heritage Inventory) encourage the provincial government to take measures to sustain and enhance the Baptiste Lake trout fishery, since the presence of lake trout is the sign of a healthy deep water lake. (Stakeholder Meeting) 	X	X			
<p>Boating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider posting speed limits for boats in narrow water bodies (rivers, channels and some bays) or environmentally sensitive areas. (Stakeholder Meeting) establish a washout station on the lake (site to be determined), and establish a bylaw making washouts mandatory for incoming boats. In addition, signage regarding the washout station and invasive species should be mandatory at all boat launch locations for incoming boats to Baptiste Lake and its watershed. (Stakeholder Meeting) 	X	X	X		
<p>Wildlife and Habitat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue to promote Loon Watch, and to encourage lake users to respect loon habitat when boating, in order to prevent excessive wake damage or harm to young loons. (Natural Heritage Inventory) 	X	X			
<p>RECOMMENDED ACTION</p>	Lake Residents/Local Businesses	BLA	Municipality	County	Provincial/Federal Government

<p><i>Invasive Species</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> focus activities primarily on education and awareness for lake residents and visitors, to prevent the introduction of new invasive species into Baptiste Lake and its watershed. (Natural Heritage Inventory) continue to work with the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters on monitoring the water quality of Baptiste Lake, and support programs regarding the prevention of invasive water species. (Natural Heritage Inventory) 	X	X			
ACTIONS ON LAND AROUND BAPTISTE LAKE					
<u>Shoreline</u>					
<p><i>Water Quality</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work to educate lake residents about shoreline preservation and stewardship, and about the shoreline threats to water quality, such as manicured lawns and paved driveways, which threaten water quality by increasing erosion and runoff, and the use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, which degrade water quality. (Natural Heritage Inventory) 		X	X		X
<p><i>Land Use</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work with the Municipality of Hasting Highlands to update the official plan and zoning by-laws, and to prepare a communications and regulatory program regarding the rehabilitation and protection of shoreline areas. (Shoreline buffers prevent erosion and discourage Canada geese). (Land Use Study) 		X		X	X
<p><i>Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> retain the shoreline landscape on any site development on the lake. (Architectural Survey) 	X		X	X	
<p><i>Natural Areas of Vegetation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourage lakefront owners to restore the shoreline areas back to a natural state wherever possible, and to protect and retain native vegetation, in order to reconstitute lost shoreline landscape. Municipal planning documents should continue to require the mandatory protection of shoreline buffer areas (e.g., 15 meters for existing lots). (Natural Heritage Inventory and Architectural Survey) support programs, such as Dock Talk and the Stewardship Council (which provide free advice, shrubs and trees), to educate, assist and encourage landowner stewardship, and to encourage the “naturalization” of degraded shorelines. (Natural Heritage Inventory) 	X	X	X		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	X	X			X
<u>Viewscape/Watershed</u>					
<p><i>Natural Architecture</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintain the natural landscape and architecture of the lake in its current status. (Architectural Survey) 	X		X	X	X
RECOMMENDED ACTION	Lake Residents/Local Businesses	BLA	Municipality	County	Provincial/Federal Government

<p>Viewscapes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work with the County and Municipality to recognize the importance – both visual and economic – of the viewscapes and natural vistas of Baptiste Lake. The viewscapes should be delineated in the official plan, and proposed developments within the viewscapes should be compatible with the natural character of the lake. (Physical Elements Report) 	X	X			
<p>Natural Areas and Vegetation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourage the Municipality to develop a tree cutting or tree preservation forestry by-law to ensure that lots retain a percentage of their natural vegetation, and thereby reduce storm water runoff. (Natural Heritage Inventory) 	X	X			
<p>Streams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> inventory and water test streams flowing into Baptiste Lake. (Natural Heritage Inventory) design a “name that stream” program to name all unnamed streams flowing into Baptiste Lake. (Natural Heritage Inventory) continue to recognize the location of all permanent and intermittent streams in official plans and zoning by-laws, and include a policy to protect these against development impacts, especially cold water streams that protect water quality and fish habitat. (Natural Heritage Inventory) 		X		X	X
<p>Wetlands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> initiate a wetland evaluation to inventory the wetlands around Baptiste Lake and to determine if these wetlands qualify as Provincially Significant Wetlands. Funding from government agencies should be sought for this purpose. (Natural Heritage Inventory) continue to identify the location and size of wetlands in official plans and zoning by-laws, and provide appropriate policy to ensure their protection. (Natural Heritage Inventory) 		X			X
<p>Wildlife and Habitat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourage lake residents to identify and protect important wildlife habitat areas (e.g., sites for turtle nesting) and to inform BLA of their efforts. (Natural Heritage Inventory) 	X	X			X
<p>Invasive Species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourage lake residents to identify invasive plant species, including purple loosestrife, and to report their location to the local MNR and the BLA. (Natural History Inventory) 	X	X			X
<p>RECOMMENDED ACTION</p>	Lake Residents/Local Businesses	BLA	Municipality	County	Provincial/Federal Government

<p>Rare Species and Species at Risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> inform lake residents of provincial and federal legislation regarding rare species and species at risk, including the incentives that are available for private stewardship initiatives. An inventory of such species in and around Baptiste Lake should be conducted. (Natural Heritage Inventory) 		X			X
<p>Minerals and Aggregates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> review all new or expanded existing mineral and aggregate sites and quarry expansions, as well as asphalt plants, to prevent negative impacts on streams feeding the Baptiste Lake watershed. (Physical Elements Report) encourage the County, Municipality, and Ministry of Natural Resources to amend their official plans and policies in order to prohibit the creation of new pits, quarries, or mining sites within the “viewscape” (site horizon) of Baptiste Lake, which would harm tourism and the quality of life of lake residents and visitors. (Physical Elements Report) 	X	X	X	X	X
ACTIONS ON THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT					
<p>Built Scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recommend that buildings on the lake should be built on a scale that allows the landscape to remain dominant. Developments that substantially change geographic or landscape profiles – the language of the lake – should be avoided. (Architectural Survey) 	X	X	X		
<p>Residential Occupancy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work with the Municipality to update land use information and residential occupancy rates, which in turn can assist the Ministry of the Environment and other agencies involved in assessing the carrying capacity of Baptiste Lake, which is stressed by increased seasonal use and increased conversion to permanent residency. (Land Use Study) maintain current development regulations until there is a solid basis in science – documented in a series of longitudinal studies – that new technologies will accommodate increased development without an adverse impact on the cold-water fishery. (BLA Lake Planning Committee) 		X			X
<p>Back Lots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> support the Municipality of Hastings Highlands and Hastings County in the practice of discouraging the development of back lots – that is, lots behind lakefront lots – that would place further stress on Baptiste Lake. (Stakeholder Meeting) 	X	X			
<p>Septic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work with residents and the Municipality to promote the proper use of septic systems (e.g., Dock Talk), and encourage a mandatory re-inspection program of septic systems around Baptiste Lake. (Land Use Study) 	X	X	X		
RECOMMENDED ACTION	Lake Residents/Local Businesses	BLA	Municipality	County	Provincial/Federal Government

<p><i>Crown Land Use Regulations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue lobbying the provincial government, together with the Federation of Ontario Cottage Associations (FOCA), to keep the “no development” policy on Crown land. (Land Use Study) 	X	X			
<p><i>County Official Plan</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work with the Municipality in updating the official plan, and offer specific recommendations for the maintenance of a healthy Baptiste Lake. (Land Use Study) 	X	X	X		
<p><i>Municipal Zoning By-Laws</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work with the Municipality to update zoning by-laws in areas such as: establish lot requirements so as to achieve a built scale that allows the landscape to remain dominant; review the list of land use issues to ensure that they are compatible with the lake and surrounding land uses; and update the Environmental Protection Zones for Provincially Significant Wetlands. (Land Use Study) 	X	X	X		
<p><i>Narrow Water Bodies (rivers, channels, some bays)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work with the County and Municipality to include a map in the official plan of all narrow water bodies on Baptiste Lake, and to amend zoning by-laws by adding a new zone that recognizes the location of these areas and requires a minimum lot frontage for new lots (e.g., of 100 meters), thus preventing the appearance of overcrowding. (Physical Elements Report) 		X			
BAPTISTE LAKE COMMUNITY ACTIONS					
<p><i>Light and Noise Pollution</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide further information to inform lake residents and visitors of the damage of light pollution to the night sky and of the damage of noise pollution to the tranquility of the lake environment. The municipality has a bylaw against excessive noise after 11:00 pm, which is triggered by a formal complaint process. The municipality has no light pollution bylaw. (Lake Residents Survey) 	X	X	X		
<p><i>Water Safety</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourage further awareness on safety issues related to swimming, boating and personal watercraft. (Lake Residents Survey) 	X	X			X
<p><i>Public Amenities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> investigate the lack of public amenities on Baptiste Lake – such as a public beach, public walking trails and a community centre – with a view to providing greater public and community access to the lake. (Stakeholder Meeting) 	X	X	X		
<p><i>Nautical Map</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> make available an accurate nautical map of greater Baptiste Lake to all lake residents and visiting boaters. (Stakeholder Meeting) 		X			X
RECOMMENDED ACTION	Lake Residents/Local Businesses	BLA	Municipality	County	Provincial/Federal Government

<p>Signage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> review municipal bylaws with regard to commercial signage and its effects on the natural beauty of the lake. The municipality is in the process of considering this action, since it is the only local area municipality without such a bylaw. (Stakeholder Meeting) 	X		X		
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Proposed approach toward implementation

If the important actions identified in the Baptiste Lake Plan are to be implemented, many different individuals and organizations will need to play a role – lake residents, boaters, lake users, the BLA, local businesses, and municipal, county, provincial and federal governments.

Many of the recommendations relating to informed awareness and stewardship can be fostered and implemented by lake residents and the Baptiste Lake Association, in partnership with others such as the Federation of Ontario Cottage Associations, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, and the provincial Ministry of Natural Resources. Other recommendations relating to municipal bylaws and official plans require facilitation by the BLA and action by county and municipal governments. Proposed changes to provincial or federal policy or legislation require actions by those governments.

It is suggested that the Baptiste Lake Association form a Lake Plan Implementation Committee, composed of a cross-section of the Baptiste Lake Community, to oversee the implementation of the lake plan, and that a five-year implementation plan be developed, with reports back to the BLA and lake residents annually.

Some program elements, such as the Shoreline Advisor Program, Welcome Wagon, Dock Talk and Neighbourhood Watch, already exist. New initiatives coming from the Lake Plan, such as stream identification and land use priorities, are in the process of being developed. Yet other elements remain to be developed. To ensure that our vision for Baptiste Lake remains strong, we must come together to secure the future of our cherished lake.

Order your copy of the final Baptiste Lake Plan!

Learn about:

- *The history of the lake*
- *The lake's ecosystem, built environment and the Baptiste Lake community*
- *The recommended actions for implementing the Lake Plan*

Get your copy of the final report, printed in full colour, for just \$20 per copy. If you would like it mailed please include additional \$5 for shipping and mailing.

If you are unable to attend the August 15th meeting, please contact the Baptiste Lake Association www.baptistelake.org to order your copy.

Payment:

Please bring your payment (cash or cheque payable to 'Baptiste Lake Association) to the August 15th meeting.

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